

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 remain pending in the application, with Claims 1, 8 and 14 being independent. Claims 1-15 have been amended herein merely to place the claims in better form for allowance. The changes have not been made for any reasons related to patentability.

Applicants respectfully traverse the election of species requirement set forth in the Office Action. A careful review of the specification reveals that the two alleged species are closely related and do not require separate fields of search. For example, both species include the common feature of performing preliminary discharge with discharge ports being capped or uncapped, depending on the number of ink discharges. Species 2 further includes the feature of conducting wiping when a number of preliminary discharges exceeds a predetermined value (e.g., 6000). Accordingly, neither Applicants nor the Patent and Trademark Office should be put to the trouble and expense entailed in multiple filing and prosecution. Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that the public at large should not be required to obtain and study several patent documents in order to have available all of the issued patent claims covering the invention.

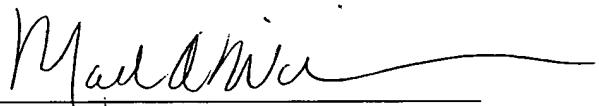
Nevertheless, in order to comply with the requirements of 37 CFR 1.143, Applicants provisionally elect Species 1, directed to Figures 6 and 8. It is respectfully submitted that at least Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14 and 15 read on the elected species. Moreover, although the Office Action states that no claims are generic, it should be noted that restricted Claims 7 and 13 depend directly on Claims 1 and 8, respectively. Accordingly, at least Claims 1 and 8 should be deemed to be generic. Further, should Claims 1 and 8 be

allowed, Claims 7 and 13 should be rejoined and also allowed. Favorable consideration is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the election of species requirement set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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